BRITISH COLUMBIA

BC STATS Infoline

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highlights

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

Labour Force

- **British Columbia's unemployment rate rose 0.4 percentage points to 9.7% (seasonally adjusted) in February.** Although the number of British Columbians with jobs increased by 8,600, more people (18,500) joined the labour force. This had the effect of pushing the province's unemployment rate higher. The Canadian unemployment rate dropped 0.3 percentage points to 8.6% in February, due to lower unemployment rates in central and eastern Canada. Alberta's unemployment rate stayed unchanged at 5.4% and there was a marginal increase (0.1 points, to 5.8%) in Manitoba, but unemployment rates declined in the rest of the country.
  Source: Statistics Canada

Housing

- **Housing starts in the province bounced back in February, increasing 27.3% (seasonally adjusted) after declining 22.2% in January.** The improvement was the first since last October. Multiple-unit starts were up in BC as a result of increased condominium activity in the Vancouver area. Canadian housing starts rose 11.0% in February, partly as a result of activity which did not come through in January due to the ice storm in eastern Canada. Starts were up in all provinces except Newfoundland (-57.1%), with the strongest increases occurring in Saskatchewan (+75.0%) and Nova Scotia (+42.5%).
  Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

- **In 1996, single family dwellings made up 58% of the housing stock in BC.** There has been a steady shift away from single family dwellings to multiple family units in the province. Single family dwellings made up 80% of BC's housing stock 1961, but by 1981, only two-thirds of the housing available in BC was single family dwellings.
  Source: SC, BC STATS estimate

- **The rate of home ownership in the province was 65% in 1996.** This was marginally higher than the national average (64%). Eighty-six percent of single family dwellings, and 36% of units in multiple-family structures, were owner-occupied. Home ownership has increased significantly in this sector of the market. In 1981, only 17% of multi-family units in the province were owner occupied. *Source: SC, BC STATS estimate*

- **The cost of new housing in the province continued to decline in January.** Vancouver's new housing price index was 4.1% lower than in the same month of 1997, while the index for Victoria fell 2.4%. The Canadian new housing price index rose 1.2% during the same period.
  Source: Statistics Canada

Exports

- **Ten percent of Canadian clothing exports originate in British Columbia.** Last year, clothing exports from the province totalled $182 million. This was five times as much as in 1989 ($37 million), and only slightly less than the total value of Canadian clothing exports ($202 million) in that year. The rapid growth in exports of apparel and accessories is part of a nation-wide trend. Canadian clothing exports increased to $1.8 billion last year.

  Quebec ($978 million) and Ontario ($514 million) are the country's major clothing exporters, but BC is ranked third among the provinces. The most important customer for Canadian-made clothing was the United States, which purchased 93% of Canadian and BC clothing exports in 1997. *Source: BC STATS*

Report **McJobs?**

Did you know...?
Ninety-eight of every 100 refillable beer bottles are returned. They get used an average of 18 times before they're crushed and sent back to the glass makers.

Tourism

- **The number of passengers using Victoria's airport continued to increase in February.** There were 82,722 passengers who travelled through the airport, 7.7% more than in the same month last year. *Source: Victoria Airport Authority*

- **BC Ferries carried 1.2 million passengers in February, 5.3% less than in the same month last year.** Passenger traffic was down on most routes. Vehicle traffic on the ferry system also fell (-7.5%) to 473,000. *Source: BC Ferries data*

Heritage Institutions

- **During 1995/96, 22.7 million visits were made to nature parks in the province.** One in three visits to Canadian nature parks during that year were made in BC. There were 8.5 million visits to other BC heritage institutions (museums, historic sites, observatories, planetariums, zoos, aquariums and botanical gardens) during 1995/96. Attendance was 2.0% higher than in 1993/94. Nationally, the number of visits to heritage institutions fell 0.8% to 54.5 million during 1995/96.
Source: SC, Catalogue 87F0002XPE

Breaking and Entering

- **British Columbia reported the highest rate of breaking and entering (B&E) in the country during 1996.** There were 78,622 incidents of B&E reported, giving BC the highest rate (2,039 per 100,000 population) of any province. Saskatchewan (1,803) was ranked second, and Quebec (1,438) and Manitoba (1,446) were the only other provinces where the rate was above the national average (1,322). Newfoundland had the lowest incidence of breaking and entering (740 per 100,000 population), making residents of that province a third as likely to be victims of B&Es as people living in BC. The type of item most often stolen from residences was audio/video equipment (32%), jewellry (13%), and money, cheques or bonds (11%). Business B&Es most often involved the theft of money, cheques or bonds (22%), office equipment (20%), and audio/video equipment (11%).
Source: SC, Juristat, Catalogue 85-002-XPE, Vol 18 No 5

- **The incidence of breaking and entering in the province increased (+1.4%) for the second consecutive year in 1996.** The Canadian rate rose marginally (0.2%) in that year, but has been on a downward trend since the beginning of the decade. Canada's B&E rate has declined 14.5% since 1991, but BC's rate has remained virtually unchanged (-0.1%). Breaking and entering has become less prevalent in most parts of the country, with rates declining more than 20% in five of the ten provinces. Saskatchewan (4.4%) was the only province where the rate was higher in 1996 than in 1991. New Brunswick (-2.2%) recorded only a slight drop, but in the rest of the country the decline in the B&E rate ranged from 12.3% in Ontario to 33.0% in Alberta.
Source: SC, Juristat, Catalogue 85-002-XPE, Vol 18 No 5

- **Canada had the second highest incidence of residential B&Es among a number of industrialized countries surveyed.** In 1995, 5.3% of Canadian households experienced at least one attempted or completed B&E. England and Wales (6.1%) ranked the highest among the countries. Canada was followed by the Netherlands (5.1%), USA (4.9%), France (3.9%), Scotland (3.6%) and Northern Ireland (2.5%).
Source: SC, Juristat, Catalogue 85-002-XPE, Vol 18 No 5

The Nation

- **Canada's net liability to foreigners continued to increase in 1997, growing 2.5% to a record $339 billion.** Americans were by far the largest creditors, accounting for 64% of total foreign liabilities (up from a record low of 34% in 1991). The European Union accounted for 21% of our foreign liabilities, with lesser amounts being owed to Japan (about 15%). *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Canadian direct investment abroad ($194 billion) exceeded foreign investment in Canada ($188 billion) for the second straight year in 1997.** Over the past five years, each additional dollar of direct investment flow into Canada has been matched by an average outflow of $1.70 invested by Canadians in other countries.
Source: Statistics Canada

highlights, Issue 98-10
March 13, 1998

For data originating from Statistics Canada: data sourced to 'Statistics Canada' has been retrieved from CANSIM, the agency's electronic database; otherwise the source is identified as 'SC' plus the publication name or catalogue number.

Infoline Report:

March 13, 1998

Important Sectors for Youth Employment

Originally published in Oct 1997 issue of *Earnings & Employment Trends*. An annual subscription is $60 + GST

Over the past several years, BC's youth has been losing ground in the job market, both in terms of level of employment and share. Between 1992 and 1997, the proportion of jobs in the economy held by 15-24 year olds declined from 16.8 per cent to 14.3 per cent.

Job opportunities for youth are concentrated in a limited number of industries. Half of all young people find work in either the Trade sector, particularly Retail Trade, or the Accommodation & Food Services sector (Hotels & Restaurants).

Industry*	Estimate of Youth Employment	
Retail Trade	62,000	**
Accommodation & Food Services Services	50,000	**
Services to Business Mgmt.	15,000	
Health & Welfare Services	15,000	
Construction	14,000	
Personal Services	14,000	**
Education Services	11,000	
Wholesale Trade	11,000	
Amusement & Recreation Services	7,000	**
Food & Beverage Manufacturing	6,000	
Agriculture	6,000	

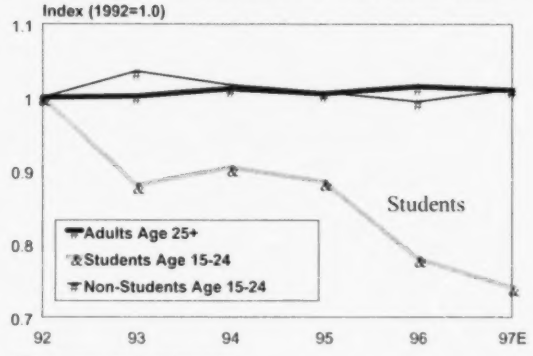
* Industries which employ at least 5,000 young persons, age 15-24.

** Industry also employs a disproportionately large number of youth compared to other age groups.

Source: Statistics Canada, Survey of Work Arrangements, November 1995.

In recent years, the perception has been that the young, who have finished their education, are having great difficulties finding jobs. The good news is that this does not appear to be the case – their success in finding jobs has kept pace with that of the adult population. Where the problem appears to lie is among students. They have had less success finding jobs, both in terms of part-time/after-school work as well as summer jobs. Only 36 per cent of students were able to find jobs in 1996 compared to 46 per cent in 1992

Employment Rates*
It Is the Job Opportunities for Students That Have Declined Over the Past 5 Years



*Employment as % of Population

Of the industries listed in the table, those which are an important source of jobs for students are, once again, Retail Trade and Accommodation & Food where one-half the jobs for the young go to students. The Personal Services sector, which includes jobs such as hairdressers, babysitters, health spa workers, etc., is also a large employer of students – 60 per cent of its young workforce are students. Also, Education Services such as colleges and universities provide many jobs for enrolled students. On the other hand, it makes sense that industries such as Services to Business Management or Health & Welfare Services would hire primarily those who had finished school as many jobs in these sectors are full-time/career-path jobs.

Youth have held their own in the Accommodation and Food Services sector. The ongoing growth in the fast-food restaurant business and its apparent preference for young, part-time

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staff is evident. On the other hand, the industry which has shown significant declines in youth employment is the Trade Sector. While the sector has pretty much held its own in terms of total jobs, (currently employing 17,000 more than in 1992), the number of young in that sector has declined by approximately 15,000.

Another industry that has lost youth jobs is the Public Administration sector. Although it is not a big player in youth employment, historically it has been an important source of training opportunities for college and university students and new graduates. In 1992, 9 per cent of total jobs in this sector went to the young while currently that number is somewhere between 5 to 6 per cent.

Somehow, lack of job opportunities for students does not seem to be as serious a problem for society as does unemployment among the "out-of-school with nothing to do" youth. Nevertheless, lack of part-time work for students does create its own set of problems. Rising debt among the young and its associated increase in personal bankruptcies is one of them. Another consideration is the value of previous work experience in finding a job after graduation. Employers put a high value on education credentials but they also look for applicants who have good track records in the workplace. Those who have not been successful in finding part-time/summer work while at school may find it difficult to acquire a meaningful job upon graduation.

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TITLES OF PREVIOUS ISSUES	ISSUE NUMBER
Duration of Unemployment	97-09
Men & Women in the BC Job Market--20 Yr Persp.	97-08
Workers' Pensions	97-07
Youth:; How Have They Fared in the 90's?	97-06
The Value of Education - It pays to stay in school	97-05
Service Producing Industries in BC	97-04
Males Are they becoming "Stay-at -home Dads?	97-03
Average Weekly Earnings in BC	97-02
Work Sharing-Solution for BC"s unemployment?	97-01
Earnings of Men & Women	96-12
Women's Labour Market Participation	96-11
Low Income Rates in BC	96-10
Occupational Structure in BC	96-09
Career Activity-Comparisons of Young Men & Women	96-08
Idle Youth-Is it a growing problem in BC	96-07
Students & Summer Employment	96-06
Comparisons of Employment in BC	96-05
Changes to the Survey of Emp, Payroll & Hours	96-04
Self Employed	96-03
Provincial Comparisons of Average Weekly Earnings	96-02
Average Weekly Earnings in BC	96-01
Population Projections - Employment Equity Groups	95-12
Early Retirement for men Age 55-64	95-11
Full-time Students Who Work	95-10

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Infoline

March 13, 1998

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BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Oct 1/97	% change on one year ago
BC	3,943.9	1.9
Canada	30,377.8	1.1
GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT		% change on
(BC - at market prices - $ millions)	1996	one year ago
Current Dollars	103,631	1.7
Constant (1986) Dollars	74,001	1.0
TRADE ($ millions)		
Manufacturing Shipments (seas. adj.) Dec	2,794	-0.9
Merchandise Exports (raw) Dec	2,041	-6.5
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) Dec	2 794	9.4
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		% change on
(all items - 1992=100)	Jan '98	one year ago
BC	109.7	0.4
Canada	108.2	1.1
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		% change on
(seasonally adjusted)	Feb '98	one year ago
Labour Force - BC	2,023	1.1
Employed - BC	1,827	-0.1
Unemployed - BC	197	13.8
		Feb '97
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	9.7	8.6
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	8.6	9.7
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Mar 11/98	Mar 12/97
Prime Business Rate	6.50	4.75
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	6.40	5.05
- 5 year	6.85	7.00
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Mar 11/98	Mar 12/97
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $	1.4075	1.3636
US $ *(reciprocal of above rate)*	0.7105	0.7334
AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS		% change on
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Dec '97	one year ago
BC	615.66	-0.3
Canada	601.62	1.1

SOURCES:
Gross Domestic Product: Statistics Canada, revised by BC STATS
Population, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Earnings: Statistics Canada
Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics

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- Small Business Quarterly, Fourth Quarter 1997

Next week

- Labour Force Statistics, February 1998
- Tourism Room Revenue, November 1997

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